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TRUST AND POPULISM: THE VOTE FOR BOLSONARO

by

THAIS DE ALMEIDA

Under the Direction of Charles Hankla, PhD

ABSTRACT

The surprising results of the 2018 presidential elections in Brazil revealed citizens' dissatisfaction with the previous government. The emergence of Jair Bolsonaro as a conservative candidate and his supporters' growth reveals a more profound political crisis in Brazil. As the feeling of not being represented increases among citizens, political outsiders see as an opportunity to take the stage. These actors often emerge in periods of crisis claiming to fight for "the people" against "the enemies" – the responsible for the crisis. In the past years, Brazil has experienced high levels of political dissatisfaction among citizens due to corruption scandals which led to the impeachment of Dilma Rousseff in 2016. Using voters' responses to the 2018-CESOP survey, this study analyzes the linkage between the crisis of representation and voting for Bolsonaro. The findings reveal a strong relationship between the government's lack of trust and high corruption perception of Jair Bolsonaro electorate.

INDEX WORDS: Trust in government, Populism, Crisis, Corruption, Presidential Election

TRUST AND POPULISM: THE VOTE FOR BOLSONARO

by

THAIS DE ALMEIDA

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Arts

in the College of Arts and Sciences

Georgia State University

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2020

TRUST AND POPULISM: THE VOTE FOR BOLSONARO

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August 2020

DEDICATION

This thesis goes to my mother, Nunciabella Moretti, for her endless support to achieve this dream. To my grandmother Adelina Moretti, for all the encouragement. To my dad, Jose Batista de Almeida Neto, whom always said that education will take me everywhere. I know dad you are very proud of me in heaven. To Diego Oliveira, for picked me up at 2 am in the library almost every day and for providing me a peaceful place to dedicate to my studies. Thanks, Diego, for all the times you saw me crying for grades and saying, "You are the smartest person I ever knew." To my friend Mary, the most amazing person I met in the United States, for her endless caring and help with my English learning process. To my friend Sarah Catao, for providing me the emotional support and friendship through this journey. To Viviane Klen for listening to my ideas and calling me Monday mornings to ask, "have you worked on your thesis today?". To my friend Felipe Bueno and Thabata Carrion, for the extensive support and friendship through this journey. To my friend in the department, Lauren Goss and Alex Pauley, for always believe in my success. To Kate Kendall for providing me the most significant academic opportunity I ever had when I felt hopeless in this journey. Thanks, Kate, for the opportunity as an SI Leader and then a mentor, and for always believe in my work. I have no words to express how thankful I am for you letting me grow as a person and a professional. Thank you, Dr. Hankla, for watching my improvement closely and for your friendship especially when I needed at most. An especial thanks to my college professor Dr. Mariano who provided my first research experience and for the belief in my capabilities in the political science field.

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1 INTRODUCTION

One of the most complex topics in voter behavior studies is understanding the reasons behind voters changing their candidate choices from one to another election. For the last years, the media has covered a variety of political scandals in Brazil. Most of them related to corruption. It is well known that corruption has played an essential role in Brazil's course of politics, and it has become chronic since its shift to democracy in the late '80s.

The Great Recession (2007-2009) affected most of the world's developed economies, particularly in North America, South America, and Europe. The global recession triggered political dissatisfaction due to high inflation and sluggish economic growth in Brazil. In 2013, the bus-fare protests led hundreds of thousands of citizens to the streets of the two biggest cities in Brazil (Sao Paulo and Rio de Janeiro) against the increase in public transportation prices ¹. As a result of political dissatisfaction, a chain of events took off that culminated in the impeachment of Dilma Rousseff. These longstanding problems, such as corruption, lack of public services, low levels of safety, and high inflation, have helped increase the anger among citizens ².

The Great Recession changed the economic scenario, which led to an increase in inequality that drove the emergence of right and left populism. Populism often involves a charismatic leader who claims to pursue the general will. Another way to think about populism is through political movements that emerge as a movement against the elites³. Scholars who study this phenomenon (Gattinara and Pirro 2018) agree with the extreme-right ability to capture opportunities to grow and become organized as a social movement. The rise of social movements in populism often can

¹Bus fare protests <https://www.nytimes.com/2013/06/14/world/americas/bus-fare-protests-hit-brazils-two-biggest-cities.html>

² 2013 protests in Brazil <https://www.americasquarterly.org/article/revisiting-brazils-2013-protests-what-did-they-really-mean/>

³ Great Recession and populism <https://www.gsb.stanford.edu/insights/how-great-recession-influenced-todays-populist-movements>

be dangerous to democracy. Also, scholars (Stengel, Macdonald, and Nabers 2019; Caiani 2018) observe that the social movement has expanded through sharing information, speeches, ideologies, and norms. Although the movement has its nationalist roots, it also shares the idea of fighting against a common enemy to restore the fundamental basis of the nation.

Economic crisis triggers the rise of extreme-rights ideas. By fearing losing its economic status, the elite finds its support in radical populist leaders seeking to reestablish the economy. Moreover, Worth (2015) suggests that the extreme-right has restructured institutions, changing behavior, and intensifying social conflicts.

The extreme-right phenomenon represents a change in the capitalist system, seeking to reorganize political dynamics and institutions. Although the extreme right is often related to strict policies, nationalism, and patriarchal society, it should not be seen as a result of neoliberalism's flaw (Saul, 2018).

In Latin America politics, the right-wing has been incorporated into neoliberalism to secure its political hegemony. Nevertheless, scholars argue that citizens' disenchantment has helped consolidate the populist platform, through the new cycle of "voting with anger" (Malamud and Nunez 2018).

Recently, scholars have attributed populism as a feature of political parties and individuals (Akkerman 2014). The populist attitudes are often addressed to people-centrism and anti-elitism, opposing relationship among the elites and the people, and the people's will. Akkerman and Spruyt (2016) conducted a study to analyze whether political trust, external political efficacy and populist attitudes in Netherlands (2018). Their findings show that populist attitudes may lie on different attitudes rather than political trust and external political efficacy, relate differently to populist voting preferences.

Considering those who have a lower level of trust toward political elites or political institutions (Fieschi and Heywood 2004) tend to support populist parties, is it possible to explain the emergence of Bolsonaro as a populist actor in a scenario of crisis?

The existing literature suggests that the emergence of a populist actor is often related to a scenario of crisis (Mudde 2007). For the purpose of this study, we will understand crisis as a crisis in representation where institutions fail to perform according to the general will. In a scenario of crisis, trust performs as both cause and effect of corruption, and, at some point, trust in others and institutions is a crucial component underlying corruption (Morris and Klesner 2010). The potential mutual causality between trust levels and corruption may result in a virtuous circle with significant implications for the anticorruption measures (Manion 2004; Wesberry 2004).

1.1 Background

During Dilma Rousseff's second presidential term, the media brought attention to one of Brazil's biggest corruption scandals. Thousands of Brazilians mobilized and marched against the government in 2016. Protesters anti-Dilma's government urged the president's impeachment due to corruption scandals. In August of the same year, Dilma Rousseff (*Workers' Party*) got impeached, and the vice-president Michel Temer took office.

Dilma Rousseff's (*Workers' Party*) impeachment helped to deteriorate not only the image of the political party but also, it helped to lose the support for more inclusive policies. The impeachment process made citizens diverging opinions about trust in the federal government. Moreover, Michel Temer became the president with the highest rejection rate in the country's history, reaching 82% of rejection at the end of his term according to public opinion.⁴

⁴ <http://datafolha.folha.uol.com.br/opiniaopublica/2018/06/1971539-reprovacao-a-temer-e-recorde.shtml>

The political instability contributed to increasing the opinion divergences among voters. On the one hand, voters who did not agree with the impeachment, classifying it as a coup, and on the other hand, voters who approved the impeachment. Voters from both sides became unsatisfied with the government's performance, and they expected a candidate who would change this scenario. Further, this event contributed to the rise of conservative ideas, supported by religious groups especially. These conservative ideas consist of a liberal economy, moderate moralism, enforcement of laws, and intolerance (Almeida 2019).

The 2018 presidential election portrayed the presidential race as an unpredictable competition. With 13 candidates from multiple parties, the incumbents' agenda strived to combat corruption⁵. At the beginning of the presidential race, the former president Luis Inacio da Silva (*Workers' Party*), well-known as Lula, decided to run for office. Later, Lula was sentenced to 12 years in prison, which made him ineligible as a candidate. Although Lula's ineligibility, the Workers' Party decided to nominate Fernando Haddad to run for office.

In the first round of the presidential elections, few candidates appeared as potential winners such as Jair Bolsonaro (*Social Liberal Party*), Fernando Haddad (*Workers' Party*), Geraldo Alckimin (*Brazilian Social Democracy Party*), and Ciro Gomes (*Democratic Labour Party*). Also, it marked with Jair Bolsonaro been assaulted with a knife while campaigning in Minas Gerais. This event was the last strike to illustrate the degree of national polarization in the presidential campaign (Chagas-Bastos, 2019).

Both Lula's arresting and Bolsonaro's homicide attempting helped strengthen the right- wing electoral coalition, which consists of supporting the alignment of church and government. Simultaneously, the right-wing politicians used political disenchantment to attract supporters.

⁵ <http://divulgacandcontas.tse.jus.br/divulga/#/estados/2018/2022802018/BR/candidatos>

Through his speech "*Brazil above everything and God above all*", Bolsonaro was able to draw the attention of those unsatisfied citizens.

1.1 Purpose of study

Considering the rising of populist actors worldwide and the urge of restoring the fundamental basis of nation, could we consider that the scenario of crisis of representation in Brazil contributed to the emergence of Jair Bolsonaro?

I designed this research considering that a political crisis helped to the emergence of populist actor. I am not assuming that populist actors only emerge in periods of crisis. Mudde's (2007) suggests that populism and crisis may have a strong causal relationship, but he alerts that crisis is not necessarily a precondition to the emergence of populist actors. By considering the emergence of Bolsonaro as a case of study, it reveals that the scenario of crisis has contributed to his favoritism among citizens. Also, the sense of dissatisfaction represents citizens' unhappiness towards the government as a system rather than the leader.

The importance of this research is to contribute to the existing literature of the emergence of populist actors in scenarios of crisis. During periods of crisis, populist actors tend to step up to legitimate their leadership by presenting themselves as voice of the people (Moffitt 2016). As a populist actor Bolsonaro benefited with the scenario of lack of trust in the government and corruption intolerance, resulting to this winning in the presidential elections in 2018.

2 ARGUMENT

The study intends to decipher the low level of trust and its relation to voting for Bolsonaro. We first contextualize crisis in Brazil and the characteristics of Bolsonaro as a populist actor. Then, we turn back to crisis to see what type of crisis we will use to understand

the support for Bolsonaro in the presidential election. In our study, we consider as crisis (1) trust in institutions and (2) corruption perceptions.

To start, we are going to link the concept of crisis and its relation to populism. Moffitt (2016) argues that populist actors strengthen their leadership by defining “the enemy” and declaring themselves as representing the general will. For Taggart (2002), populist actors can wider a sense of crisis and therefore, make the crisis more important than what really is.

A typical crisis of representation arises from the exclusion of many citizens from the political process, the lack of popular or direct democracy, or inadequacy of existing mechanisms of representation (Mainwaring 2006). One of the most significant enhancements of democratic representation was the end of the military regime in 1985. Brazil created a new constitution that brought back citizens' rights and the sense of free and fair elections.

In the early '90s, Brazil faced one of the most corruption scandals in the history performed by president Fernando Collor. Hundreds of thousands of citizens flooded the streets, urging for the impeachment of the president. Collor got impeached in 1992, and the vice-president took power.

The corruption scandals in the course of Brazil's history are not the only concern among citizens. Mainwaring (2016) approaches the concept of state deficiency, where the government fails to provide basic governance, legal, and security functions. The 2018 CESOP survey presents respondents with lower trust in the executive branch, the judiciary, and political parties. Also, Brazil's economic performance has substantially decreased, contributing to high inflation and unhappiness among citizens. However, not only economic performance has concerned citizens. Approximately 87% of Brazilians perceived corruption as a very serious problem.⁶

⁶ https://www.cesop.unicamp.br/por/banco_de_dados/v/4538

Mainwaring (2016) argues that citizens became more tolerant of politicians' failure to deliver essential goods but less tolerant of accepting corruption, especially in economic hardships. For him, the failure of delivering essential services can affect citizens confidence in an institution in two ways: (1) by lower inflation, unemployment, and crime rates, and high confidence in parties and legislative and more students enrolled in school, (2) individuals who have negative state's perception should reflect this in lower institutional confidence.

In Brazil, the idea of “*rouba, mas faz*” (He steal, but he gets things done) is embedded in the culture. Politicians like Paulo Maluf were caught in corruption scandals, but although they stole hundreds of thousands *reais*, they delivered what they promised. With technological development and transparency policies, citizens have had more access to information and have more ability to select a candidate that fits to their ideas.

With the ability to turn a crisis into his favor, populist actors often point rivals' failures to attract support. During his campaign in 2018, Bolsonaro had the opportunity to turn the electorate in his favor after Lula being arrested. By promising to sweep off corruption and the responsible for it, Bolsonaro saw the number of supporters increase. By saying that, is it possible to consider Bolsonaro a populist leader? First, we are going to mention some of Bolsonaro's speeches and its relation to populism. Then, in the literature review session, we are going to approach Bolsonaro's attitudes and his populist characteristics.

Considering his inflammatory speeches, the holistic approach (Castanho Silva and Hawkins 2019, p.28-29) fits in our analysis of populist elements. By blaming the *Workers' Party* as responsible for the crisis, Bolsonaro target the party and Lula as “the enemies” against “the people”. In one of his tweets, Bolsonaro accused the *Workers' Party* of a criminal organization

diverging the ideals of the country. Bolsonaro says “Our country is big and prosperous. It is not a criminal faction to be controlled from jail.”⁷

In an interview, Bolsonaro gave a patriotic declaration “*I represent Brazil, green and yellow. [...] let’s unite, for being an example, for dedication, for the love to the country, for respecting family, for the will of moving away from socialism and communism.*”⁸ Through speeches like these, Bolsonaro elevated the existing crisis to an alarming level by saying that the *Workers’ Party* had plans to implement a socialist regime that would lead to a threaten to democracy (Tamaki and Fuks 2020).

3 LITERATURE REVIEW

This next section will discuss the existing literature about the emergence of populism and its connection to crisis. In the literature on populism, Laclau (2005) suggests that crisis is a precondition to the emergence of a populist actor. I will start by discussing the relevant literature in populism and its relationship with crisis. I then discuss how crisis is often used by populist actors to attract supporters. I will narrow down political crisis by looking at two aspects (1) trust in government, and (2) corruption perception.

3.1 Populism

The loss of faith and dissatisfaction with representatives has spread across Latin American countries, especially Brazil. The inefficiency of traditional political parties and representatives to deliver citizens' needs has helped set the stage for the rise of populist actors. The emerge of these

⁷ Jair M. Bolsonaro on Twitter: “Our country is big and prosperous. It is not a criminal faction to be controlled from jail.” <https://twitter.com/jairbolsonaro/status/1049126717363838976>

⁸ Bolsonaro claims to protect the country against communism and “cure” lulistas with employment. <https://exame.com/brasil/bolsonaro-diz-defender-pais-de-comunismo-e-curar-lulistas-com-trabalho/>

actors derives from “an ideology that considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogeneous and antagonistic groups, "the pure people" versus "the corrupt elite," and argues that politics should be an expression of the general will of the people.” (Mudde 2004).

The literature on populism approaches a causal relationship between crisis and populism, where crisis acts as external to populism. Laclau (2005) advocates the linkage between crisis and populism. For Laclau, a crisis is a precondition for the emergence of populism. Furthermore, Laclau (2005) and Mouffe (2005) support that a crisis of representation is essential to populist actors' existence.

Following the idea of a strong causal relationship between crisis and populism, literature also has seen populism as a strategy (Roberts 1995). Roberts (1995) claims that populism emerges in scenarios of profound crisis where institutions or authorities lose their efficiency to structure the political behavior and identities of popular sectors. Indeed, the approach of crises as an external factor provides an opportunity to rise populist leaders claiming to replace the old structure to a new one (Moffitt 2016).

Still, in the discussion of the relationship between crisis and populism, Mudde (2007) observes that the level of this causal relationship may change. For Mudde (2007), we should analyze what constitutes a crisis rather than rejecting the relationship. In other words, what other variables illustrates crisis (i.e. unemployment). Moreover, Mudde (2007) concerns with crisis being characterized as permanent what would make difficult to recognize populism as an unique phenomenon that emergences periodically (Moffitt 2016).

Kaltwasser (2012) also presents concerns about the association of crisis to populism. He believes that populism emerges only when democracies oscillates, and political actors not necessarily gain support when objective indicators of crisis (i.e. unemployment) stands out. For

Kaltwasser (2012) the relationship between crisis and populism not only has structural factor, but rather subjective indicators such as feelings of moral loss (Taggart 2000) and status (Lipset 1960)⁹.

The rejection of the relationship between crisis and populism expresses the ability of a populist leaders to govern without external crisis, and consequently gaining electorate support. Arditì (2007) claims that the emphasis on crisis as an external indicator of populism restrings the analysis only to moments of political failures.

Moffitt (2016) alerts to the problem of perceiving crisis and populism as a causal explanation because of (1) crisis as a contested phenomenon that lacks clear and discrete boundaries; (2) the idea of crisis as a result of causality (Byrne and Uprichard 2012); and (3) the variables associated with crisis (Mudde 2007).

The other discussion in literature is the perception of crisis as internal to populism. Moffitt (2016) argues the performance of crisis allows populist actors to define the enemy and strengthen their leadership by representing the general will. Taggart (2002) also supports that populist actors' ability to create a sense of crisis is more important than what a crisis really is. In the study of Latin American, De la Torre (2007) believes that the notion of crisis cannot be explained by structural explanations but rather, crisis is a phenomenon experienced culturally, socially, and politically (Moffitt 2016, 119).

The word crisis is often related to failure (i.e. market failure) but does not necessarily means the same. Hay (1995,1999) presents failure as the structural precondition of a crisis, whereas crisis illustrates the identification of a failure. In addition, Moffitt (2016) perceives that failure does not demand the urgency of acting but rather with crisis. The turning point of the failure being elevated

⁹ Moffitt, Benjamin. *The Global Rise of Populism: Performance, Political Style, and Representation*. 1st ed., Stanford University Press, 2016. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctvqsd8. Accessed 21 July 2020.

to crisis depends on cultural or political mediation. Therefore, crisis is a phenomenon mediated and performed internally rather than an external agent to populism.

We have discussed about the relationship between populism and crisis and the perception of crisis. But how do populist actors react to a scenario of crisis? What are the strategies that populist actors use to frame “the people” versus those responsible for the crisis?

Moffitt (2016) lays out six abilities used by populist actors to overcome crisis and legitimate their leadership. We are going to use these six steps in order to understand the emergence of Bolsonaro.

The major step that Moffitt (2016) provides consisting in identifying or choosing a failure that could possibly turn to the level of a crisis. Moreover, populist actors usually blame political representatives or elite as the responsible of the failure. In an interview during his campaign in 2018, Bolsonaro accused the *Workers’ Party* as the responsible for the economic crisis¹⁰. By accusing the party, Bolsonaro found another way of gaining attention from the electorate and he was able to elevate the sense of crisis.

The following step approached by Moffitt (2016) is the linkage of chosen failure with other failures and its elevation to a wider framework. As discussed previously, Laclau (2005) alerts the attempt of political actors to portray the failure to the level of crisis. In the discussion of initial demands, Laclau (2005) argues that as the initial demand remains unanswered or unfulfilled by the actor, institution or system, it will begin to link with other unfulfilled demands in an “equivalential chain” (2005,74)¹¹.

¹⁰ Bolsonaro “ Vou pegar um país destruído”, diz Bolsonaro ao culpar gestões do PT Jornal O Estado de São Paulo. <https://www.otempo.com.br/hotsites/elei%C3%A7%C3%B5es-2018/vou-pegar-um-pais-destruido-diz-bolsonaro-ao-culpar-gestoes-do-pt-1.2058499>

¹¹ Moffitt, Benjamin. *The Global Rise of Populism: Performance, Political Style, and Representation*. 1st ed., Stanford University Press, 2016. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctvqsd8. Accessed 21 July 2020.

The movement “*Vem pra Rua*” (Come to the Streets) is an example of linking issues through performance and spectacle. The initial purpose of the movement was the fight against corruption. The heads of the movement called thousands of Brazilians to march against corruption in 2014. Later, the movement switched its main purpose by urging for Dilma’s impeachment. Therefore, the movement “*Tchau, querida!*” (Bye bye dear!) took the place not only on the streets but also online and it resulted to the impeachment of Dilma Rousseff.¹²

The populist actor often blames those they identify as responsible for the crisis. The demonization of social groups, and the antipathy towards the elite, sets the ground for populist actors to identify an enemy. Bolsonaro did this through his speeches by targeting the Workers’ Party as responsible for the crisis. Moreover, he also targets those who sympathy with the party by saying in the interview “*I will cure Lulistas with employment*”¹³.

Another strategy that populist actors rely on is the usage of media to propagate performance. Moffitt (2016) argues that populist actors promote and perform a sense of crisis through media. While campaigning in Minas Gerais, Jair Bolsonaro was assaulted with a knife by Adelio Bispo. In an interview he affirmed that Adelio tried to kill him because somebody paid for this service.¹⁴

Once the sense of crisis has been created and propagated, the next step is to present solution to the crisis (Moffitt 2016). Populist actors often offer a simplistic solution to the crisis. Bolsonaro did not present a feasible agenda for the crisis during his campaign. His novelty about the *Workers’*

¹² <https://www.thecut.com/2016/04/brazil-sexist-impeachment-campaign-dilma-rousseff.html>

¹³ Bolsonaro claims to protect the country against communism and “cure” lulistas with employment. <https://exame.com/brasil/bolsonaro-diz-defender-pais-de-comunismo-e-curar-lulistas-com-trabalho/>

¹⁴ <https://veja.abril.com.br/politica/em-entrevista-bolsonaro-refuta-apoio-do-centrao-em-caso-de-vitoria/>

Party ruined the country, makes him to declare many times that it will be difficult to overcome crisis, but he will create simple and fast solutions to solve this issue.¹⁵

Lastly, the ability of a populist actor to continue to propagate the crisis by switching the initial crisis. Moffit (2016) argues that Hugo Chavez started to break down of trust in regard to old party elite. By doing it, he switched the attacks on the domestic opposition into a imperialist conspiracy by the Unites States (Hawkins 2010).

3.2 The rise of Political Outsiders

The widespread dissatisfaction with the quality of democratic representation has turned many Latin American countries in a profound political crisis (Hawkins 2019; Mainwaring 2006). Identifying the roots of these failures in democratic representation are not easy. Mainwaring (2006) argues that the mainstream of democratic representation consists in a relationship between citizens (so called as principals), and politicians or parties (the agents) while in democracy. citizens pursue their interests through other channels as well (i.e. social movements).

A crisis of democratic representation involves citizens' perception of feeling underrepresented to the rejection of democratic mechanisms (i.e. voting for outsiders). In some Latin American countries, these factors reflect the widespread of dissatisfaction and rejection of parties and legislatures (Mainwaring 2006). One mechanism to measure dissatisfaction with parties consists in the shifting of votes from one party to another over two or more years. This scenario not only reflect electoral volatility but also brings the attention to the quickly rise of new parties and the decline of traditional ones. These new parties can play as a fertile ground for the emergence of political outsiders once they have weaker organizations and needs a personalistic connection to voters.

¹⁵ <https://noticias.r7.com/economia/bolsonaro-preve-medidas-amargas-para-evitar-crise-como-a-da-grecia-14112018>

The rise of outsider leaders and the decline of traditional parties occurs in a weakened institutional scenario (Mainwaring 2006). The outsider actors claim to be more democratic than the previous government by suggesting replacing the old structure to a new efficient one. They often delegitimize political parties and undermines democratic institutions. Moreover, the populist political outsiders often stand against corruption and blame “the enemy” as responsible for the crisis.

3.3 Understanding Trust

The literature on trust originated as an interpersonal relationship in which trust involves belief in individuals. Putnam incorporated trust in the discussion of social capital. He argues that trust is set of positive behaviors such as participation in voluntary associations, civic participation, and participation in informal social network (Kaase, 1999).

We often deposit trust and like on individuals who agree with us. Trust involves risks and expectations. It is the belief that the other will correspond to our expectations without taking advantage of us. Trust corresponds in an uncertain scenario in which people assume that they take risks.

Trust plays an essential role in the individuals' involvement with society, such as reciprocity, solidarity, and cooperation (Newton, 2001). To illustrate the concept of trust among individuals, we can think about trusting in our children to be at school. We expect our children to be at school studying while we are at work. To extend the idea of trusting, we can think about when we elect a district representative who addresses the needs of our community. Or when we trust that an institution has developed its job in favor of citizens. In other words, trust is an act that requires a cooperative social environment in order to facilitate collective behavior (Zmerli; Newton, 2008).

Gamson argues that trust is the probability that the political system will deliver expected outcomes even if left untended. Expected outcomes that if it is not delivered, it can cause frustration. It is a winning or losing game in which the expectation of gaining or losing determines who we put our trust.

3.4 Political Trust

For years, many scholars have debated the importance of political trust and its determinants. Despite the growing literature on determinants of trust, it is not an easy task to define what forces affect it. Also, a debate remains on how political trust is measured precisely. Another point is the relevance of declining trust in recent years and how it has affected the political environment.

Citizens' trust in government is a complex mix of ideologies, experiences, stereotypes and images, comprising but not limited to the specific aspects of public sector organization and functioning. Trust can be related not only to a particular incumbent but also as expectations towards the political system and its organization. Many times, voters decide to trust in an incumbent even though the risks of disenchantment. Also, lack of political trust can lead to distrust in the political system as a whole.

Almond and Verba (1963) argue that political trust is essential for legitimacy, governability, and to strengthen democracies. The concept of political trust involves not only political actors but also the system as a whole, for example, trust in elections. In elections, trust is the primary mechanism for legitimacy; in other words, to ensure that the system has functioned well. Through free and fair elections in democracies, citizens can choose their representatives and hold politicians' accountability (Eder and Katsanidou, 2015).

Public and personal interests may converge. In this case, representatives are more likely to lose citizens' support. As a consequence, it turns inviable to deliver campaign promises leading to government crisis (Scholz and Lubell, 1998). Therefore, the performance of political actors contributes to the good function of the political system.

Another factor in the political system in which trust represents the function of democracies is the political institutions. Norris (2011) argues that the impact of trust on attitudes and behavior well fits when we consider trust in democracies. Trust in institutions can be influenced by trust in politicians, but also in democratic mechanisms and the political system as a whole (Norris, 2011).

Another method to measure the levels of government trust in a society is by analyzing citizens' trust in institutions. Considering democracies, trust in institutions plays an essential role in citizens' behavior. People are more likely to accept the government's policies and to comply with laws.

Power and Jamison (2005) conducted a research in which they explored trust in politicians in democracies in Latin America from 1990 until 2005. They argue that low trust in Latin American politicians cannot be interpreted without considering other factors such as social and political trust. The causes of distrust in this analysis include: (1) economic performance, (2) corruption scandals, (3) the effective use of political institutions by incumbents, and the consequences include democracy support. The results showed that trust in 7 Latin American countries, including Brazil, presented low levels of trust comparing to ancient democracies. In other words, new democracies might be more vulnerable to public trust. Therefore, both advanced and emerging democracies demonstrate that citizens are more likely to evaluate incumbents from democracy as a type of regime.

Also, trust in institutions at the individual level may strengthen the dynamic among groups or increase rejection. For example, groups involved in corruption are more likely to hurt democracies and institutions' function through challenging trust in the government as a whole.

Newton and Norris (2000) researched the relationship between social and political trust at the individual level in 17 industrialized democracies. The findings suggest that social and political trust may vary at the individual level. For instance, in Turkey, a high educational level contributes to establishing high trust in the government, whereas it helps to decrease social trust.

3.5 Trust and Institutions

Moises and Oliveira (2008) analyzed satisfaction with democracies and trust in institutions at the individual level. The results suggested that citizens' experiences shape their attitudes about political not only when it comes to complying with rules, but also it depends on the impact of the function of institutions and governments. Once they also consider citizens' interests, institutions are more likely to gain citizens' support. Nevertheless, when institutions face inefficiency or corruption practices, it is more likely to lose citizens' support and been put in discredit.

Moises and Oliveira (2008) also argue that the lack of trust and dissatisfaction generates disengagement, cynicism, and alienation from democracy. Dissatisfied and mistrust citizens are more likely to support anti-institutional regimes where political parties and the parliament have a lower influence on the government's function, making a shift to populism or extreme-right actors.

4 EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

4.5 Hypothesis

I set forth my research question, "Has low trust in government contributed to the electorate choosing Bolsonaro?" and I seek to analyze the level of trust in government and its relation to voting for Bolsonaro in the presidential elections in 2018. I expect to see that low trust in government among voters helped to elect Bolsonaro. I chose trust in the institution (Federal Government) over trust in incumbent evaluations, since scholars have suggested that institutional evaluations are stronger related to political trust than incumbent evaluations (Feldman, 1983; Williams, 1985). Although institutional evaluation provides a strong support for governments' approval, it is relevant to mention that lack of trust in the government also reflects dissatisfaction with incumbents (Citrin, 1974; Citrin and Green, 1986).

Therefore, I suggest the following hypotheses:

H1: Low trust in government increases the likelihood to vote for Bolsonaro

H2: High corruption perception among citizens increases the likelihood to vote for Bolsonaro

4.6 Data

As I selected the presidential elections in Brazil in 2018 as my case of study, I examine a cross-sectional survey conducted by CESOP-IBOPE in 2018 in Brazil¹⁶. This survey consists of macro-level analysis which consists of 2.506 people over 16 years old (legal voting age in Brazil). According to the survey, responses revealed how low the levels of trust are when addressed to institutions especially towards the federal government and the judicial system.¹⁷

¹⁶ https://www.cesop.unicamp.br/por/banco_de_dados/v/4538

¹⁷ Approximately 42% of the responses have low confidence in the federal government and 40.1% have low confidence in the judicial system.
https://www.cesop.unicamp.br/vw/1IMr0SKIwNQ_MDA_f9f8b_/TF_04622.pdf

The present research project analyses the factors of voting for Bolsonaro in the presidential elections in 2018. In this study, I set voting for Bolsonaro as my dependent variable to test the hypothesis that low trust in government contributes to shaping individuals' preference for Bolsonaro. In order to operationalize the dependent and independent variables, I define voters as my unit of analysis. Thus, I renamed the independent variables that I would like to consider for this study. Like many of the independent variables selected for this investigation displays in categories, I rename and recode, and turned some into dummy variables and ordinal variables.

First, I examine the number of respondents who voted for Bolsonaro in the runoff in the CESOP 2018 survey. Individuals answered the question of “who did you vote for president in the runoff?”. I reduced it to a dummy variable, and I coded as follows: “1” for those who voted for Bolsonaro, and those who did not vote for him, voted null or blank as “0”.

Since I want to understand the impact of trust in government and corruption perception in voting for Bolsonaro, while also controlling for other variables which shapes the electorate support, I developed two regression models to investigate the impact of my independent variables on voting for Bolsonaro. Since my dependent variable (voting for Bolsonaro) is dichotomous, I used a logit regression for both models. In the first model I tested the relationship between voting for Bolsonaro and trust in government. By analyzing this relationship interacting with others independent variables, this model seeks to investigate the impact of low trust in government for the electorate. In the second model I tested the relationship between voting for Bolsonaro and corruption perception. In this model, I also include the same independent variables as in the previous model. By running this analysis, I seek to investigate the impact of high corruption perception for the electorate.

The main independent variables in my study are trust in government and corruption perception. For trust in government, I set as an ordinal variable and measured on the scale of 1 to 4, where “4” represents extremely trust in the government. For corruption perception, I measured on the scale of 1 to 4, where “4” represents corruption as a very serious problem. created a model to test whether trust in government has influenced voting for Bolsonaro. In this model, I also consider gender, age range, religion, religion, and education variables. Then, I performed a logit regression to ensure that a lack of trust in government represented a crucial role in voting for Bolsonaro.

5 RESULTS

In the first model, I ran a regression to test the hypothesis of the impact of lower trust in government on voting for Bolsonaro. *Table 1* shows that the independent variable trust in government has a negative coefficient (-.2441144), indicating that the probability of voting for Bolsonaro is most likely to happen as the value of the independent variable (trust in government) decreases. In other words, it is expected that the vote for Bolsonaro reflects the low trust in government. Therefore, the correlation between the variables (trust and vote for Bolsonaro) is negative. As trust in government goes down as most likely to people voting for Bolsonaro. There is strong evidence that the relationship between the variables is statistically significant since the p-value ($p < 0.05$) is equal to zero. The p-value of 0.00 provides strong evidence for us to reject the null hypothesis.

In the second model, I ran a regression to see if high levels of corruption perception contribute to the election of Bolsonaro. *Table 2* shows that the independent variable corruption perception has a positive coefficient (.1743031) indicating citizens perceiving corruption as a very

serious (3) and a serious problem (4) increases the likelihood to vote for Bolsonaro. In other words, the correlation between corruption perception and voting for Bolsonaro is positive since both variables increase. Also, there is strong evidence that the relationship between the variables is statistically significant since the p-value ($p < 0.05$) is equal to zero. The p-value of 0.00 provides strong evidence for us to reject the null hypothesis.

Moreover, the results reveal the profile of Bolsonaro's electorate in 2018. In this study, we coded female as "2" (see Appendix B), and the results were not surprising since the new versions of right-wing populist actors carry strong sexists' characteristics.

In both models, the results for the variable male have a negative coefficient (Table 1 and Table 2), which indicates that males are most likely to vote for Bolsonaro since they have low trust in the government and high corruption perceptions. Also, people over 44 years old (see Appendix B) are most likely to vote for Bolsonaro in both models.

The support of the evangelical community is another interesting result. For this variable (see Appendix B), I coded "1" for evangelical responses. In both models, the variable evangelical has a positive coefficient indicating that as trust in the government decreases, and the corruption perception increases, evangelicals are most likely to vote for Bolsonaro. The rise of the religion segment -evangelicals- has expanded over the years and the participation of evangelicals in politics. Bolsonaro saw a beneficial alliance with conservative evangelicals during his campaign by advocating for the preservation of the customs and morality and disqualifying the government for being corrupt. For future studies, I suggest that the evangelicals' participation in politics might bring a beneficial relationship to right-wing populists to run for office. Also, this support may threaten the course of democracy in countries with profound political instability.

Table 1: Logit Regression of Trust in Government

Variables	Coefficient (Standard Error)	p-value
Low trust in Government	-.2441144 (.0452161)	0.000
Male	-.4367963 (.0859923)	0.000
Age	.1054052 (.030208)	0.000
Evangelical	.4910621 (.0922901)	0.000
High Education	.0951504 (.0207431)	0.000
Reg1 (North)	.3005182 (.2116928)	0.156
Reg2 (Northeast)	-.5709779 (.1759358)	0.001
Reg3 (Southeast)	-.0930057 (.1643457)	0.571
Reg4 (South)	.1753779 (.1858606)	0.345
Constant	0.848984 (.3010332)	0.778
Observations	2,462	

The education variable presents unexpecting results in both models since the coefficient is positive, and the p-value is equal to zero. In both models, the findings reveal that the likelihood of voting for Bolsonaro increases as the education level and corruption perception increase, and trust in government decreases.

In this study, the variables region (see Appendix B) coded as “1” living in the region. The results present regions northeast and southeast (see Appendix B) having both negative coefficients in each model, but only region Northeast as statistically significant in both models since the p-values are less than 0.05.

Table 2: Logit Regression of Corruption Perception

Variables	Coefficient (Standard Error)	p-value
Corruption Perception	.1743031 (.0926541)	0.060
Male	-.4499075 (.0845444)	0.000
Age	.1117688 (.0297763)	0.000
Evangelical	.4865459 (.0906602)	0.000
High Education	.0828823 (.0203425)	0.000
Reg1 (North)	.3931949 (.209811)	0.061
Reg2 (Northeast)	-.494494 (.1737834)	0.004
Reg3 (Southeast)	-.053265 (.1622599)	0.743
Reg4 (South)	.1862721 (.1833262)	0.310
Constant	-1.297091 (.4340595)	0.778
Observations	2,462	

6 CONCLUSION

This study attempted to understand what is behind voters electing Bolsonaro as a president in 2018. In order to select the appropriate variables to this analysis, we first started by conceptualizing populism and crisis and the emergence of political outsiders. The literature presented discussed different approaches to the causal link between crisis and populism. While some approaches suggested crisis as a precondition to the emergence of a populist leader (Laclau 2005), others seen a dangerous route where it tends to restrict the emergence of populist actors only in periods of crisis (Mudde 2007; Moffitt 2016; Arditì 2007).

The main characteristics of a populist actor and its performance in period of crisis help us to identify some populist characteristics in Bolsonaro through his speeches. His ability to spectacularize failure to the level of crisis, helped us to outline the mechanisms of his performance in the campaign. Also, by making the initial political instability wider, Bolsonaro was able to expand his electorate what results in his winning in the presidential election. Therefore, by addressing the repertoire of fighting against corruption and the old system, it seems clear that crisis offered a stage for him to be elected.

Through the analysis of 2018 CESOP survey, we were able to identify the electorate as well as test the hypotheses that (1) low trust in the government increases the chances of his winning, (2) high corruption perception among citizens contributed to electing Bolsonaro. The findings provided statistical evidence that low trust and high corruption perception helped with to be elected. Moreover, other variables such as male, evangelicals and age provided us an expected result that as being male, evangelical and older, Bolsonaro's voters presented low levels of trust in the government and high corruption perceptions. But the variable education and the northeast

region provided us surprising results indicating that high educated people from the northeast region have higher corruption perception and lower trust in government, and therefore they were more likely to vote for Bolsonaro.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Variable Coding

Vote for Bolsonaro

- Participants were asked “Who did you vote for in the runoff?”
- These categories were then reduced to “Voted for Bolsonaro” coded as 1, which consists of only the “Jair Bolsonaro” responses, and “No voted for Bolsonaro” coded as 0, in which consists of all responses in the “Fernando Haddad”, “Null vote”, “Blank votes”, “Didn’t answer”, “Don’t Know/Don’t remember”, and “Missing” categories.

Trust in Government

- Participants were asked “For these same institutions, I would like to know what is trust in the Federal Government?”
 - Not at all (1) Low (2) Somewhat (3) Extremely (4)

Corruption Perception

- Participants were asked “Would you say that corruption in Brazil is very serious problem, serious, not very serious, or not a serious problem?”
 - Not Serious (1) Not Very Serious (2) Serious (3) Very Serious Problem (4)

Gender

- Participants were asked “What is your sex? Response options were male and female

- Male is coded as 1, and female is coded 2

Religion

- Participants were asked “Please, indicate which one of these is your religion” Response options were “Buddhist”, “Candomble”, “Catholic”, “Kardecist/ Spiritualist”, “Evangelical”, “Mormon/Adventist/Jehovah Witness”, “Santo Daime/Esoteric”, “Seicho-No-Ie/ Messianic/ Perfect Liberty”, “Umbanda”, “Atheist/Agnostic/ Don’t Believe in God”, “Don’t have religion”, “Don’t Know”, and “Did not Answer”
- These categories were then reduced to “Evangelical” coded as 1, which consists of only yes for the “Evangelical” responses, and “No” coded as 0, in which consists of all responses in the “Buddhist”, “Candomble”, “Catholic”, “Kardecist/ Spiritualist”, “Mormon/Adventist/Jehovah Witness”, “Santo Daime/Esoteric”, “Seicho-No-Ie/ Messianic/ Perfect Liberty”, “Umbanda”, “Atheist/Agnostic/ Don’t Believe in God”, “Don’t have religion”, “Don’t Know”, and “Did not Answer” categories.

Region

- Participants were asked “What region do you live?” Response options were North, Northeast, Southeast, South, and Middle East.
- North is coded as Reg1, Northeast is coded as Reg2, Southeast is coded as Reg 3, South is coded as Reg4, Middle East is coded as Reg5

Age

- Participants were asked “What is your age?” Response options were classified in ranges:

- 16-17 (1), 18-24 (2), 25-34 (3), 35-44 (4), 45-54 (5), 55-63 (6), and >64 (7).

Education

- Participants were asked “What is your education level?” Response options were classified as:
- Illiterate/None (0), <4th (1), <5th (2), <8th (3), <9th (4), <12th(5), High School” HS" (6), Some College (7), College (8), and Post-Grad (9) categories.

Appendix B: Variable Summary

Vote for <u>Bolsonaro</u>	Frequency
0	1,023
1	1483
Total	2,506

Trust in Government	Frequency
1	714
2	1,042
3	372
4	289
Total	2,417

Corruption Perception	Frequency
1	25
2	41
3	246
4	2,170
Total	2,482

Gender	Frequency
1 (Male)	1,037
2 (Female)	1,469
Total	2,506

Evangelical	Frequency
0 (No Evangelical)	1,687
1 (Evangelical)	798
Total	2,485

Age	Frequency
16-17	23
18-24	395
25-34	539
35-44	518
45-54	450
55-63	356
>64	225
Total	2,506

Education	Frequency
None	73
<4th	214
<5th	294
<8th	188
<9th	226
<12th	193
High School	748
Some College	296
College	236
Post-Grad	38
Total	2,506

Reg1 (North)	Frequency
0 (No)	2,310
1 (Yes)	196
Total	2,506

Reg2(Northeast)	Frequency
0 (No)	1,862
1 (Yes)	644
Total	2,506

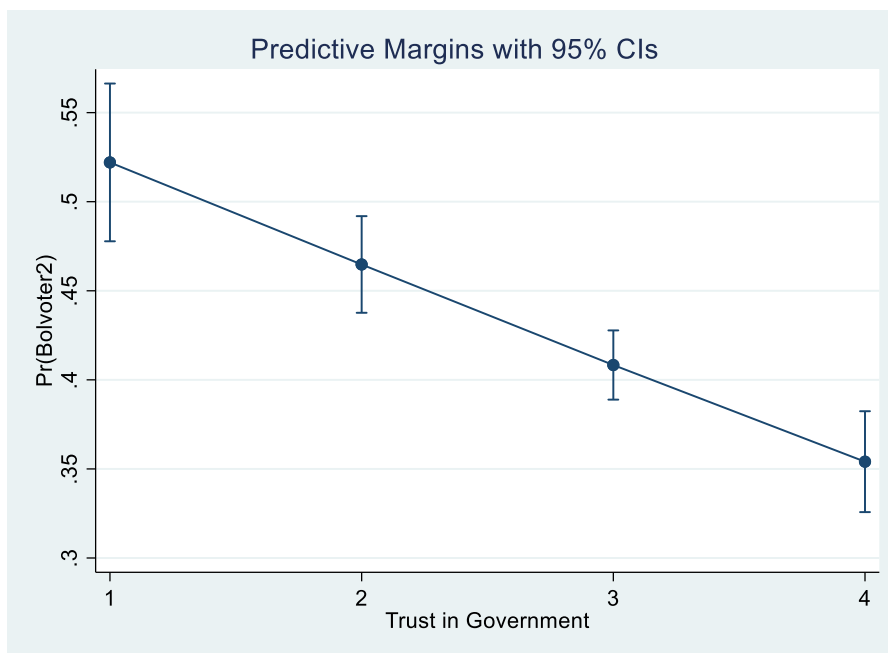
Reg3(Southeast)	Frequency
0 (No)	1,414
1 (Yes)	1,092
Total	2,506

Reg4 (South)	Frequency
0 (No)	2,128
1 (Yes)	378
Total	2,506

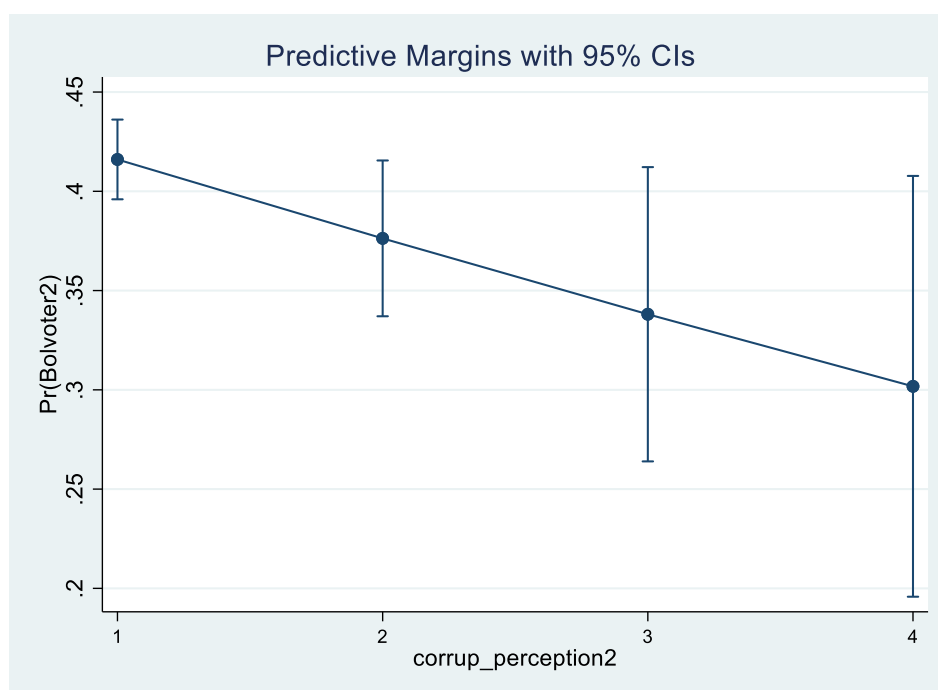
Reg5(Middle East)	Frequency
0 (No)	2,310
1 (Yes)	116
Total	2,506

Appendix C: Graphics

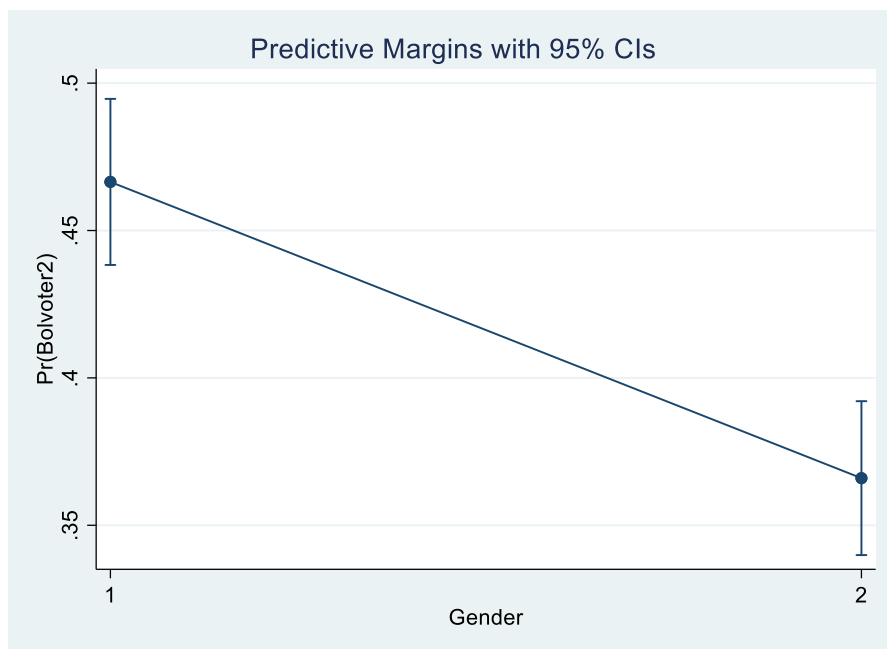
(1) Result for the analysis between Vote for Bolsonaro and Trust in Government



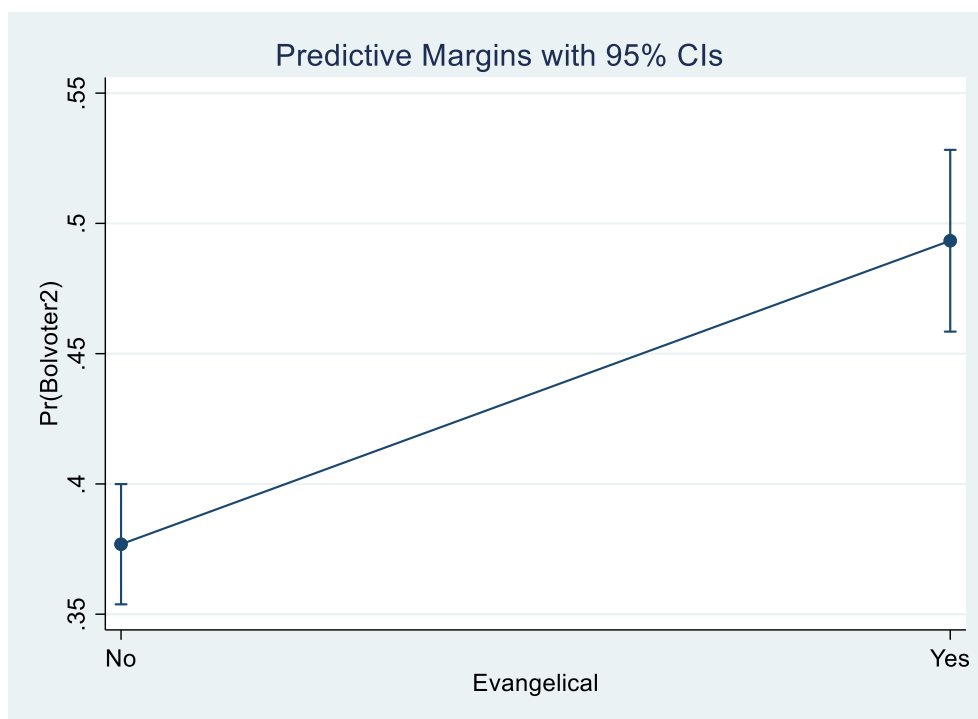
(2) Result for the analysis between Vote for Bolsonaro and Corruption Perception



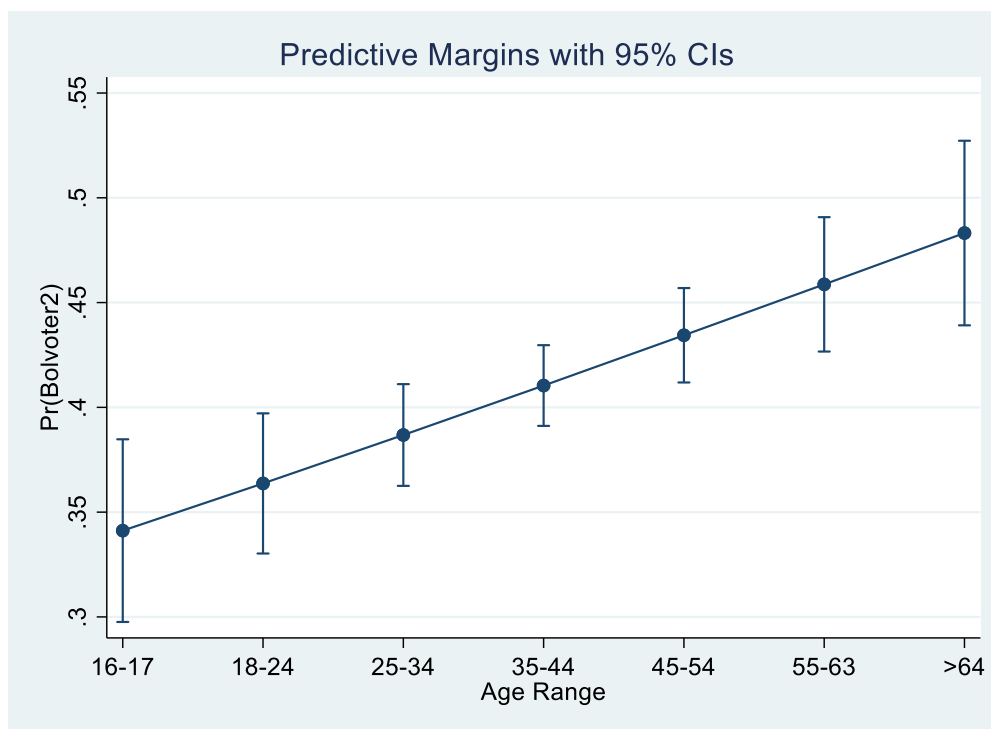
(3) Result for the analysis between Vote for Bolsonaro and Gender



(4) Result for the analysis between Vote for Bolsonaro and Evangelicals



(5) Result for the analysis between Vote for Bolsonaro and Age



(6) Result for the analysis between Vote for Bolsonaro and Education

